

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1, 5, and 9 without prejudice.

Please amend the claims as follows:

Sub  
B2

2.(amended) A device for a variable-rate encoding system, comprising:

a judging unit judging whether a voice signal is a vowel when a voice part of a voice signal is sounded;

AD

a rate setting unit setting a voice encoding bit rate to a bit rate lower than the bit rate usually used when the voice part is sounded if the voice signal is a vowel;

an LSP coefficient calculating unit calculating an LSP coefficient obtained from the voice signal; and

an LSP interval judging unit judging whether an interval between the LSP coefficients is equal to or less than a prescribed threshold value.

Sub  
B2

6.(amended) A rate control method for a variable-rate encoding system, comprising:

(a) judging whether a voice signal is a vowel when a voice part of a voice signal is sounded;

AD

(b) setting a voice encoding bit rate to a bit rate lower than the bit rate usually used when the voice part is sounded if the voice signal is a vowel;

(c) calculating unit calculating an LSP coefficient obtained from the voice signal;  
and

(d) judging whether an interval between the LSP coefficients is equal to or less than a prescribed threshold value.

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B37

10.(amended) A computer-readable storage medium which records a program for enabling a computer to implement a rate control method for a variable-rate encoding system, the process comprising:

(a) judging whether a voice signal is a vowel when a voice part of a voice signal is sounded;

A7

(b) setting a voice encoding bit rate to a bit rate lower than the bit rate usually used when the voice part is sounded if the voice signal is a vowel;

(c) calculating unit calculating an LSP coefficient obtained from the voice signal;  
and

(d) judging whether an interval between the LSP coefficients is equal to or less than a prescribed threshold value.